Bilateral dialogues with Pakistan and USA

1670. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL:
SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to have a comprehensive bilateral Indo-US and Indo-Pak dialogue;

(b) if so, whether it would cover all areas including trade, industry, tourism etc.; and

(c) what other plans are being formulated and implemented in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) The Composite Dialogue provides the framework for discussions between India and Pakistan on a wide range of issues. President Musharrafs reassurance in the Joint Press Statement of January 6, 2004, not to permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner, allowed the process of the Composite Dialogue to be initiated in February, 2004. The scheduled of meetings that was agreed to during the Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan on 18 February, 2004 has been maintained. The meetings between the drug control authorities, and border security forces, have been positive and idenitified new areas of cooperation. The dialogue between the nuclear experts on June 19-20, 2004 identified areas of convergence, and the two sides agreed to improve communication links between the two DGMOs, establish a hotline between Foreign Secretaries and to work towards MoU on pre-notification of flight testing of missiles. The Foreign Secretaries of the two countries met in New Delhi on June 27-28, 2004 and discussed "Peace and Security including CBMs" and "Jammu and Kashmir", within the framework of the Composite Dialogue. The two sides proposed a comprehensive framework for CBMs aimed at initiating and enhancing communication, coordination and interaction and exchanged views on carrying the process forward in an atmosphere free from terrorism and violence. Talks on the remaining six subjects of the Composite Dialogue *i.e.* Siachen, Sir Creek, Tulbul Navigation Project, Economic and Commercial Cooperation, Terrorism and Drug Trafficking, and Promotion

of Friendly Exchanges in various fields, were held in the last week of July and first half of August. During discussions on Promotion of Friendly Exchanges in various fields, wide-ranging proposals were made for promoting friendly exchanges and cooperation in the fields of art, culture, archaeology, education, science and technology, youth affairs and sports, media and tourism. It was agreed that implementation of the programmes would be undertaken through mutual coordination. India also made a series of proposals for trade promotion, transit, cooperation in the fields of agriculture, petroleum and natural gas, banking, information technology, telecommunications, postal services, civil aviation, shipping, capital market, etc. between the two countries. A meeting between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries, to review the overall progress, is scheduled to be held in India on September 5-6, 2004. It would be preceded by a meeting between the two Foreign Secretaries on September 4, 2004.

Government of India has an elaborate bilateral dialogue structure with USA comprising more that 15 institutional dialogues covering a broad range of issues of mutual concern and interest, including strategic issues, defence, combating international terrorism, peacekeeping, science and technology, health, trade, space, energy and environment. In the area of Trade and Commerce, India and USA have a Bilateral Economic-Dialogue, which has five components—finance, and investment; commercial dialogue; trade policy; energy; and environment. A Cabinet level dialogue takes place in the Bilateral Forum on Finance and Investment. The Working Group on Trade and Policy also exists for interaction between Commerce and Industry Minister and the US Trade Representative. The Commerce and Industry Minister also interacts with the US Commerce Secretary under the India-US Commercial Dialogue. The Government of India attaches high importance to its relations with the US on all issues mentioned above. The bilateral dialogue, including the dialogues enumerated above, has a provision for interaction at regular intervals and is ongoing.

Indian Hostage Episode

†1671. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of Indian hostage episode in Iraq Government t

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.